Sault Ste Marie Horse & Pony Club Discovery to Ride Welcome Guide

Welcome

Welcome to the Sault Ste. Marie Horse & Pony Club Discovery to Ride Program!

We're excited to welcome you to the barn and help you begin your riding journey. Whether you're climbing into the saddle for the first time or returning after some time away, Discovery to Ride provides a safe, supportive, and enjoyable introduction to horseback riding. Our experienced instructors, dedicated volunteers, and dependable lesson horses are here to help you learn at your own pace.

About Discovery to Ride

Discovery to Ride is a six-lesson introductory package designed for beginners and riders looking for a refresher.

- Six (6) riding lessons
- Private or semi-private instruction
- Use of a suitable Club horse or pony
- Use of tack
- Certified riding helmet (if required)
- Instruction from experienced coaches

Throughout the program you'll be introduced to safe horse handling, grooming, horse care, tack, basic riding skills, and horsemanship. Every rider learns at their own pace—our goal is to help you build confidence while having fun.

Preparing for Your Lesson

Your first lesson can be exciting—and sometimes a little overwhelming! Don't worry, every rider was new once. Our instructors and volunteers are here to help make your experience enjoyable from the moment you arrive.

Before You Leave Home

Please ensure you bring:

- ASTM/SEI-approved riding helmet*
- Boots with a defined heel
- Long pants suitable for riding
- Riding gloves (optional but recommended)
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Water bottle
- Long hair tied back
- A positive attitude and willingness to learn!

*SSMHPC has a limited number of helmets available for riders to borrow. For the best fit, comfort, and hygiene, riders who participate regularly are encouraged to purchase their own properly fitted ASTM/SEI-approved riding helmet.

Arriving at the Farm

Please arrive approximately **30 minutes before** your scheduled lesson unless otherwise communicated otherwise by the Lesson Coordinator.

Upon arrival, proceed directly to **C Barn (the Lesson Barn)** where you will meet your instructor or volunteer, receive your horse assignment and begin preparing for your lesson.

If this is your first visit, simply let us know—our instructors and volunteers will be happy to show you around and answer any questions.

Attendance

- Please notify the Lesson Coordinator if you are unable to attend as soon as possible.
- Rider absences are not eligible for make-up lessons or refunds.
- Always follow the directions of instructors and volunteers.

If the Club cancels a lesson due to severe weather or unforeseen circumstances, every reasonable effort will be made to schedule a make-up lesson.

Your Lesson Experience

Depending on your lesson, you may:

- Meet your horse
- Learn safe horse handling
- Groom your horse
- Learn to tack up with assistance
- Participate in your riding lesson
- Untack and care for your horse afterwards

Don't worry if you've never done any of these things before—we'll teach you every step along the way.

* The Lesson Coordinator will confirm arrival time, departure time and riding time before your first lesson. *

Weather

The safety of our riders, volunteers and horses is always our highest priority.

Lessons will continue in most weather conditions. Please dress accordingly. However, when weather or footing makes riding unsafe, instructors may adjust the lesson format.

Depending on the circumstances, a lesson may include:

- Horsemanship activities
- Stable management
- Horse care
- Theory and safety education

These educational sessions ensure riders continue learning while allowing the safety and welfare of both horses and riders to remain the priority.

*If a lesson must be cancelled due to severe weather or other unforeseen circumstances, families will be notified as soon as possible through the Club's regular communication channels (text, email, and/or Facebook).

Safety First

Horses are large, powerful animals with their own instincts and personalities. By following a few simple safety practices, we can help create a safe and enjoyable environment for riders, families, volunteers and our horses.

Around the Barn

We ask everyone to:

- Walk—never run—in the barn or around horses.
- Speak quietly and avoid sudden movements that may startle a horse.
- Keep gates and stall doors closed unless instructed otherwise.
- Do not feed horses treats without permission from an instructor.
- Respect all horses by giving them space and following staff instructions.

During Lessons

To help riders get the most from their lesson:

- Listen carefully to your instructor.
- Ask questions whenever you're unsure.

- Follow instructions promptly.
- Encourage and support fellow riders.

Parents & Visitors

Parents and spectators are always welcome.

To help lessons run smoothly, we ask that families:

- Watch from designated viewing areas.
- Allow instructors to coach riders without interruption.
- Ensure younger children always remain supervised.
- Keep dogs at home unless prior arrangements have been made with the Club.

Continue Your Riding Journey

We hope your Discovery to Ride experience is just the beginning!

Many riders choose to continue into our annual Lesson Program, which offers weekly lessons from September through June, continued skill development, horsemanship education, clinics, fun shows, and a welcoming equestrian community.

If you'd like to continue riding after completing your Discovery to Ride package, speak with our Lesson Coordinator. We'll be happy to discuss the transition into our annual Lesson Program and help you find the best fit.

Communication

Questions?

Contact: Text or call **705-987-5551** or email: **lessons@ssmhpc.com**
Please watch your email for important announcements, schedule updates, and weather notifications.

Follow us on Facebook: Strathclair Farm's Lessons & Giddy Up & Go Riding Camps

Welcome to the SSMHPC Family

Thank you for choosing the Sault Ste. Marie Horse & Pony Club.

We are honoured to be part of your riding journey and look forward to helping each rider build confidence, develop lifelong horsemanship skills and create lasting memories.

Whether your goal is to ride for fun, compete, or simply enjoy spending time with horses, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive and enjoyable learning environment for every rider.

We look forward to seeing you at the barn!